

Dec 7, 2020

Opposition Testimony for HB 796

Dear Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Civil Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer written testimony. I would have preferred to have testified in person, but due COVID and the late notice of this hearing, I could not take the needed time off work to attend.

My name is Shannon Gallagher and I am testifying as a private citizen of Dublin, Ohio. I am a former teacher, mother of four, a member of Moms Demand Action and a member of a gun-owning household, I implore you to vote Nay on HB 796.

As I began writing my testimony I realized that I have many friends who believe as I do and are much more articulate than I. One of these like minded friends is Sandra Fiehrer who wrote in her testimony in opposition to this bill that, "In the middle of a global pandemic, it's shameful that your priority is to expand gun rights over gun safety against the wishes of the majority of 11.7 million Ohioans as you head to recess. While protests blanket the people's statehouse, Ohio and this nation over racial inequality and police brutality against the black community, how misaligned can your intent be?... I'm a gun owner and the last thing that I want is to have more guns in unsafe hands on the street."

I have worked alongside Mitchell Pinsky a student at OSU for years and he reminded me and I quote, "Studies have found that Stand Your Ground laws have a disproportionate impact on

communities of color. Research also shows that when white shooters kill Black victims, the resulting homicides are deemed justifiable 11 times more frequently than when the shooter is Black and the victim is white. Instead of moving forward on policies to make our communities safer that have the support of the majority of Ohioans and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle - like background checks in Senate Bill 183, and a red flag policy in Senate Bill 184 - the Ohio Senate is considering extreme and dangerous 'Stand your Ground' legislation. This bill would upend the traditional 'duty to retreat' and allow a person to shoot to kill in public even when there is a clear and safe alternative to deescalate the situation."

According to my friend Chelsi Rhodes, another OSU student and a survivor of gun violence from Dayton who could not testify in person today, "This bill is not the change we want and need. Stand Your Ground only encourages violence and ultimately harms many families and communities. In fact, in Florida Stand Your Ground, cases the person who claimed Stand Your Ground could have retreated to avoid the confrontation 79 percent of the time, and 68 percent of the time, the person killed in these disputes were unarmed. These deaths could have been prevented if a Stand Your Ground law had not enabled the shooters to be reckless. Since enacting Stand Your Ground legislation in Florida, there has been a clear increase in firearm injuries and homicides¹. I understand that citizens need to defend themselves in certain situations, but harming someone with a firearm should be a last resort, and Stand Your Ground does not make that a clear priority. The law already protects everyone's right to self-defense, and the statistics show that Stand Your Ground only harms communities by raising their crime rates."

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety. The Inherent Danger of Stand Your Ground Laws. February 8, 2019. <https://everytownresearch.org/fact-sheet-stand-your-ground/>

I thank you for allowing me to write on behalf of myself and others who due to COVID19 and the late notice of this hearing are not able to attend and testify tomorrow morning. I do not live on an island, I live in a community and what I have written whether I quoted others or used my own words, they are all truths that I believe with every bone in my body. Please, for all of us, vote Nay on HB 796. Thank you!

Shannon Gallagher

Dublin, OH